

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology, thank you for this opportunity to share my observations and comments regarding the efforts now being taken in the protection of our critical infrastructures – specifically in the energy sector.

My name is Roger Serra. I am the Director of Security and Emergency Management for the Seattle City Light. Prior to this position I was the Director of the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management and before that I was the Chief of Police for the University of Washington. It is also my distinct honor to have served in the United States Army where I retired as a Colonel with my last assignment as the Principal Regional Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer for FEMA Region X serving as the DOD Liaison for Military Support to Civil Authorities. I have been involved at the local, state and federal level in the areas of emergency management and homeland security. I served on the State's Committee on Homeland Security representing local emergency managers and chaired the committee's Intelligence Sub-committee where we developed the concept of the Washington State Joint Analytical Joint Center and the Regional Intelligence Centers. It was also my privilege to serve as the President of the Washington State Emergency Management Association.

Seattle City Light, a department of the City of Seattle, is one of the nation's largest municipally owned utilities in terms of the number of customers served. Seattle City Light has a service area of 131.3 square miles and serves more than 345,000 customers and a population exceeding 680,000. Seattle City Light provides the primary power for the cities and county's governmental offices and operations. It's criticality to the region's reliance on electricity to maintain continuity of governmental functions and its impact to the major corporations located in the Greater Puget Sound Area cannot be overstated. Regional collaboration with the other public utilities in the area is imperative and one which has been cited as a **Best Practice Initiative in Managing Emergencies** by the American Public Power Association study of how leading companies have implemented effective and comprehensive emergency planning.

Also cited in the Best Practices Initiative was that the excellent relationships and formal regional liaisons established in the Northwest utilities are the foundation for successful emergency response and provide valuable insights for other utilities to emulate. Utilities rely on cooperation among multiple functions to handle emergencies and communicate with all involved parties.

Critical Infrastructure Protection is listed as one of the DHS National Priorities and as such deserves priority for appropriate funding designed to improve and enhance its physical, information technology and communications systems. Programs such as the Buffer Zone Protection Planning have been beneficial, but one that still needs federal emphasis that provides assistance for conducting effective risks and vulnerability assessments and funds to implement the recommendations made in the assessments. Energy generation facilities such as dams, power-lines and substations are highly visible facilities that have greater exposure to threats and attacks. Mitigation efforts such as utilizing the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures to

reduce vulnerabilities is one initiative, when applied, has proven effective. Mutual cooperation among law enforcement agencies at the local, county, state and federal levels is crucial for the protection of critical infrastructure such as the Seattle City Light Boundary Dam located in Pend Oreille County and the Canadian border.

There is now a greater focus for hiring dedicated staff to handle the responsibilities of security and emergency management in the power industry that previously were assigned as “additional duties” to non-qualified individuals in the organization. This professionalism is a reflection of the industry’s commitment to making sure that things are done properly and consistent with industry standards.

Emphasis for Continuity of Operations planning is necessary in ensuring that essential functions are performed and priorities established for the restoration of power to those sectors considered vital to the protection of life and property. The power industry also recognizes that it must do a better job of communicating to other infrastructure providers when service will be restored and utilize technology that provides the capability to alert its employees and customers during a disaster. Equally important is the need to develop an effective Threat Early Warning System (TEW) that partners law enforcement with both public and private in ensuring that appropriate intelligence is shared on a timely basis.

National organizations such as the Large Public Power Council (LPPC) and the Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC) serve to network the growing number of utility security and emergency management practitioners.

Issues for your consideration:

Provide direct grant funds for agencies operating critical infrastructures for the purpose of conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, development of Continuity of Operations Plans, conducting exercise and for the purchase and installation of voice/data communications systems, state of the arts Information Technology systems and equipment necessary to enhance physical security.

Expand list of facilities to qualify for Buffer Zone Protection planning and increase amounts for implementing effective protective systems.

Establish Regional DHS offices to improve coordination and interaction with regional partners.

The opportunity to share our concerns, strengths and initiatives with your committee is appreciated. I am prepared to answer any questions you may have regarding my roles and responsibilities.